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PUBLIC HEALTH MOVEMENT ON THE PACIFIC COAST

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It is appreciated here, as elsewhere, that the great motive power back of this world-wide health movement is the discovery of the germ theory of disease through the efforts of our scientists, to whom the deepest gratitude is felt, and to whom the highest praise must be given. The proof of the appreciation of the work can be best expressed by spreading this new gospel. An eminent surgeon says, that more has been accomplished in the last thirty years than in thirty centuries before.

Chemistry, physiology, bacteriology, hygiene, sanitation, dietetics, psychology, philanthropy, jurisprudence, sociology and criminology are giving the required knowledge that only needs practical application to bring to humanity, health in its widest and truest sense, the health that enables man to develop the highest and best of which he is capable, in his physical, mental and moral nature. Undoubtedly the first great step has been the tuberculosis campaigns, which have stimulated greater activity in overcoming other diseases, especially those of an infectious nature. The tuberculosis associations have been active throughout the West.

A special interest was awakened in the State of Washington by the Tuberculosis and Public Health Exhibit at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, held in Seattle, in 1909. Enthusiastic local leagues were formed in many counties. There is an active state society. While Washington has an excellent law, providing for the reporting of cases, and for disinfection, this law has been a dead letter from the first; that is, for eleven years, for lack of funds. Strenuous efforts will be made at the present Legislature to procure an appropriation.

In Oregon, \$10,000 has been expended through the Visiting Nurses' Association in caring for indigent tuberculars. A state sanitarium, well equipped, accommodates 150 patients. The Penitentiary and Insane Asylum have separate outdoor pavilions for their tubercular inmates.

California has a state association, which also has been

greatly limited by lack of funds. Seventy-five per cent. of all the money reaching its treasury has been received from Los Angeles. The great problem in California is not of the native born, who acquire the disease, but the penniless consumptives who come in such advanced stages that cure is impossible. Fifty per cent. of the cases belong to this class. So acute did conditions become a few years ago that a conference of social workers, through the Associated Press, sent an appeal to Eastern organizations to refrain from sending their advanced and penniless cases. Many of the Southern California fruit ranches are largely colonized by consumptives, and many have been permanently cured. In Banning, 65 per cent. of the inhabitants have settled there on account of tuberculosis, either in themselves or their families. California has no public sanatoria for tuberculous cases, but allows a dollar a day for each patient to charitable institutions caring for its consumptives.

To Southern California belongs the credit of having established the first charitable sanatoria for consumptives—The Redland Settlement, at Redland; The Barlow Sanatorium, Los Angeles; The Stehman Sanatorium, of Pasadena.

At one of the insane hospitals a wire enclosed yard has been furnished for outdoor life for the inmates. So much is it appreciated that a mere suggestion that he will have to go indoors if he is boisterous or noisy, causes the patient to become docile and tractable. Large numbers of educational pamphlets in different languages have been distributed by the tuberculosis societies.

Through the San Francisco Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, the supervisors have passed a most stringent law which places San Francisco unquestionably in the foremost rank so far as tuberculous legislation is concerned. Lectures have been given to unions, fraternal organizations, settlement workers, mother's clubs and in schools and churches. Thousands of circulars have been distributed at these lectures.

Tuberculosis clinics are held in several of the large cities on the coast. Tuberculosis exhibits by means of demonstration cars, lantern slides and moving pictures, have been most fruitful agents in educating the public, especially in California.

The increased demand for certified milk is a direct result

coach, or any indoor place where people congregate that does not soon become stuffy, close and oppressive. The hope of the future is in the child, and common justice demands that he should not be subject to the deleterious influences of impure air, dangerous at any period of life and especially to the growing child. Though insidious, it may prove as great a menace in undermining the system in the formative years of life as some of the dreaded infectious diseases of childhood. One would shrink with loathing and disgust from taking again into the body the waste from the intestinal canal or urinal tract, yet vitiated, polluted, poisonous exhalations from the lungs are constantly being rebreathed in poorly ventilated rooms.

A few years ago a prominent architect of large experience in California said that there was *one* perfectly ventilated building in the State, and that, a small bank in Woodland. In response to the query, whether the laws of mechanics had been applied successfully for satisfactory ventilation, he replied, "Yes, perfectly." In this bank the fresh air entering the building is forced to pass through a sheet of water, which removes impurities, and cools the air in summer, and warms it in winter. The expense of installing the ventilating system was \$5000. A few days ago the same architect was asked if the Woodland bank was still the only well-ventilated building in California. The reply was, "There are now many public buildings well equipped, some theaters, few churches, but no homes. Unfortunately, in many of the buildings provided with an adequate ventilating system the supervision is faulty, especially in the school buildings. The teacher, deeply absorbed in other matters, is the last one to have charge of the ventilating, and few janitors are equal to the responsibility. No engineer, no matter how perfect his machine, would think it could be run by one not trained. At first the expense of installing the ventilating plant was at fault, and now the expense of supervising and operating the plant is the cause of bad air in the school-rooms."

Perhaps no one has done more of late than the psychologist in discovering physical handicaps in his endeavor to determine the degree of mental deficiency in the backward child. The detection of physical defects, or deviations from the normal, in their incipiency is not often permitted the physician, because his ad-

vice is rarely sought until defects resulting from disease have advanced so far as to be apparent to the laity. So at the same time that the public is being educated, the physician is stimulated to use every means available to obtain an early and correct diagnosis.

There is no work in the West comparable in its entirety to that being done in the University of Pennsylvania in the Psychological Clinic, under the direction of Dr. Lightner Witmer. One sees in this clinic the results, often most gratifying, of correcting defective sight or hearing or from removing impacted or diseased teeth, or adenoids and tonsils, and overcoming digestive disturbances; any one of these conditions, in different cases may reveal the tremendous influence of a physical disability, in arresting normal mental or moral development. Juvenile court judges, probation officers, and social workers, all begin to appreciate the deterrent and perverting effect of physical troubles upon the normal health of the child. Neither is there on the Pacific Coast, except in Los Angeles, anything that approaches the extraordinary "team work" done in Boston and Philadelphia, *i. e.*, the co-operation of specialists in medicine, oculists, aurists, neurologists and dentists, with the social workers, the probation officers and the public hospitals.

The state board of health of California has made gonorrhea and syphilis reportable, the same as other infectious diseases. It has the distinction of being the first State to inaugurate such a measure. When it is considered how many innocent ones suffer through this disease, it is appalling and too much cannot be said of the necessity of enlightenment to avert the evil in the future. It is certain that ignorance of the infectious nature of sexual diseases on the part of the growing young man and the false belief that his physical well-being requires sexual gratification, are the principal causes for his downfall. Grandin states it strongly, "Man, largely through ignorance of the calamities following the misuse of this, the reproductive instinct, has converted it into one for the extermination of the species." But by far the most potent agents in the continuance of the evil are the imperfect laws which license prostitution and require examination of the women prostitutes only, allowing men to go free. In view of the infectious nature of sexual diseases, ex-

termination of these diseases can never be expected, nor even lessened, with such laws. It is true, a recent remedy, 606, or Salvargan, claims to cure syphilis. Whether this will counteract the fear of infection, remains to be seen. It is quite certain that, though there is a remedy for diphtheria and rabies, it is not considered a good reason for exposing oneself to these diseases.

Another source of danger to the young man, in encouraging sexual gratification, is the use of alcohol. Dr. Prince Morrow, of New York, who has studied the subject, says, "Perhaps, more than any other agency, alcohol relaxes the moral sense, while it stimulates the sexual impulse."

It is encouraging to note in this connection that in California 200 saloons were closed during 1910; that 68 precincts out of 74 voted "dry"; that there are 170 towns and 65 incorporated cities from which the traffic has been banished. Eleven counties are dry, and Los Angeles bars the saloon from 11 blocks in the business center. California is given the credit of having the most effective school law, passed in 1909, of any State, regarding health measures. An educator especially awake to the necessity for healthful conditions of the schoolroom, well says, "The schools furnish an unrivalled opportunity for detecting and checking disease and defects among children." It will be only a matter of a short time, it is hoped, before medical inspection will be in every school.

The bubonic plague, in California, the truth concerning which the daily press has falsely concealed from the public, has yet to be fought. In the light of present knowledge, its absolute eradication in the State depends upon extermination of the ground squirrel. Three hundred and eighty-five cases of plague-infected squirrels were found in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1910, in the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Monterey, Merced, San Bonito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus and San Luis Obispo. There was a death of one human reported in June, 1910, due undoubtedly to infection by squirrel fleas. The origin of the epidemic in 1908 was supposed to be of foreign importation, now it is known that the infected squirrels were the cause. Federal officers are still watching the seaports, and the extermination of rats goes on. Oregon, fortunately, has never had an

invasion of bubonic plague, due probably to the fact that it has no easily accessible seaports, as in Washington and California. Washington has had no plague among men for over two years, and only one in rats, early in 1910. The work of destroying rats has been continued by the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service since the appearance of plague there in 1907. Washington profited by the disastrous experience of California in 1903, and, by energetic measures, promptly and effectively checked the outbreak. It, too, realizes the danger that may come to it through the infected ground squirrel of California. Besides bubonic plague, the other Oriental diseases, leprosy, trachoma, pellagra, beri-beri, amœbiasis and hookworm, are being carefully watched by the health authorities of the seaports. Cancer and poliomyelitis, miscalled infantile paralysis (for adults are also victims), the cause of which science has not yet discovered, continue their deadly work here, as elsewhere. California takes great satisfaction in the comparatively small number of deaths among infants from dysenteric and diarrhoeal troubles. The cool summers on the coast, and the absence of humidity in the interior, are the beneficent agents lessening these enteric diseases of children.

While the hygienic laboratories of the Pacific Coast are doing effective work, they are much handicapped for funds. The death rate from typhoid, based on the census of 1910, is 20 per 100,000 in California, approximately only two-thirds of the United States rate. Oregon and Washington are also as yet unable to control their water supply and disposal of sewage in rural districts, so that typhoid still continues its ravages, a woeful fact in this enlightened age.

The California State Health Bulletin, in the November number of 1910, considers the necessity of a compulsory sanitary privy law, or ordinance, to be strictly enforced in all localities in which connection with a sewer system is not enforced. There is also presented a plan for a sanitary privy, so clear in detail that any 14-year-old boy of average intelligence and mechanical ingenuity could build it. There follows minute directions for keeping it clean and how to dispose of the excreta, to prevent pollution of drinking water and vegetables eaten uncooked.

The playground movement has been enthusiastically taken
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up in Washington and California. Oregon provides each school with 200 feet square of playground. The playgrounds are supervised by voluntary attendants, there being no salaried employees. California has the distinction of having the first state playground association. The object of the state association is to promote the playground movement, in all its phases, throughout the State, to promote outdoor life, to supervise plays and to co-operate with school authorities in a more spirited use of all the playgrounds. The University of California and the normal schools have established playground courses in their summer schools. The society seeks to establish a spirit of "free play, of fair play, and of more play"; and to educate the Commonwealth to the worth of stronger boys and girls.

In April, 1910, the State Board of Health called a conference of the welfare organizations of California to meet at Sacramento. The result of this meeting was the organization of the California Public Health League. Its purpose is stated in the constitution to be the co-ordination of effort, and the promotion of economy and harmony among all public health organizations and agencies in California, thus correlating the important work of the many organizations working to upbuild California's standards of health and happiness. The heartiness with which the league is accepted promises well for the ultimate working out of its purposes. The bulletins sent out by the State Board of Health of California deserve especial mention, because they show a decided step in advance in their scope and subject-matter.

This paper would not be complete without at least an enumeration of the welfare organizations not before mentioned, and which are strong allies in health-conservation work: State Charities Aid and Correction Organization; California Public Press; California League of Municipalities; California Teachers' Association; Women's Christian Temperance Union; Y. M. C. and Y. W. C. Associations; welfare committees of the State Federation of Labor; fraternal organizations; chambers of commerce; American Red Cross, California, chapters; the American Medical Association, through its public health education committee; Association of Collegiate Alumnae, through its certified milk fund and baby hygiene committee; California Congress of Mothers; and women's clubs.